House Select Committee on Homeland Security Democrats

JIM TURNER, Ranking Member

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Congressman Jim Turner, Ranking Member of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security gave the following statement at a hearing today of the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Science, and Research & Development, "Homeland Cybersecurity and DHS Enterprise Architecture Budget Hearing for Fiscal Year 2005."

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Good Morning Gentlemen.   Mr. Liscouski, it is a pleasure to have you testify before our Committee again. Mr. Cooper, I believe this is the first time you have appeared before us – welcome.

The Department of Homeland Security's cybersecurity mission is two-fold. First, it is the key agency responsible for coordinating our nation's efforts to protect our computer networks and critical infrastructures.   Second, it must ensure that its own information technology systems are well-integrated and armed with appropriate safeguards.

We recognize that these tasks are not easy but they must be done to help ensure the security of our homeland. The ever-changing nature of technology means that the Department must have the best expertise, personnel, tools, and full authority to effectively accomplish its mission.

Unfortunately, the Department is not making the progress needed to secure our nation from a cyber attack. It is also not moving quickly enough to integrate and protect its own information technology systems.

Mr. Liscouski, six months ago you appeared before this Subcommittee and told us that the Department, having finally found a Director to lead its cybersecurity efforts, was undertaking significant initiatives to further our country's efforts to secure cyberspace and prepare and respond to network attacks. To date, however, the cybersecurity initiatives that the have been unveiled have not gotten us much further than we were before the creation of the Department. Indeed, some of the initiatives appear to duplicate existing efforts.

Let me just mention a few specific areas in which I see the Department's efforts lagging.

- First, it is not apparent to me that the Department has in place the ability and authority to direct other agencies with specific expertise in the event of a cyber crisis.

- Second, the Department does not appear to have an effective and meaningful public-private cybersecurity partnership. Many in the private sector have little or no idea what you are doing, what is expected of them, or how they are supposed to integrate and coordinate with the Department.

- Third, the Department has not sufficiently moved forward with the *National Strategy to Secure Cyberspace* released by the Administration a year ago. Why haven't we yet seen

clear assignments of responsibilities and deadlines for the Strategy's implementation? If it is because the strategy won't work or is ineffective – we need to know that.

- Lastly, Mr. Liscouski, the Department's 2005 budget does not clearly lay out what your directorate is planning to do to further our cybersecurity efforts. We've only seen broad assertions and categories of activities. There seems to be lacking a clear vision on what the Department is doing to secure cyberspace.

Mr. Cooper, I must say I am equally concerned about the state of the Department's efforts to build robust information technology systems within the Department and secure its own internal networks.   There are specific areas, in particular, for which I am concerned.

- First, the Department's efforts to date have been too slow. Just last week, I saw one official stating that simple e-mail can't get passed to people in the same office and that it takes hours for e-mail to bounce around the Department to reach its destination. We won't win the war on terror if Homeland Security officials can't even talk to each other.

- Second, good and consistent information technology policies can help speed the integration of terrorist watch lists, strengthen the security of our borders, and allow us to "connect the dots" to find terrorists.   It worries me, Mr. Cooper, that you have publicly suggested that a consolidated watchlist may not be necessary. In my view, achieving this goal is critical for making our homeland security programs work.

- Third, it is not clear to me, Mr. Cooper, that you have the sufficient authority to coordinate and direct the divisional Chief Information Officers within the Department. If this is a problem, I hope that you will be candid with us regarding any additional authorities your position requires.

- Lastly, this past December, the Department received a 34 –the lowest grade of any agency- in the Government Reform Committee's annual grading of agencies on the security of their computer systems. The Department should be setting an example for the rest of government to follow – not trailing at the back of the class.

Gentleman, I thank you for appearing before our Committee today to address these important issues.

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